

Ways and Means Sends Health Care Bill to House Floor for Full Vote

Washington, DC – **Rep. Earl Blumenauer (D-Ore.) voted early this morning to pass America's Affordable Health Choices Act, HR 3200**. Blumenauer, a member of the Ways and Means Health Care Subcommittee, has been engaged in daily conversations and negotiations around this bill, which included pieces of legislation he introduced earlier this year.

Blumenauer, who has supported a public plan from the start, has been working to provide all Americans with high-quality, affordable care. Among his top priorities has been protecting Oregon's high quality, efficient, and affordable Medicare plans from unjust cuts to pay for the rest of the bill.

Working with the committee, Blumenauer orchestrated an increase in bonus payments that will go to regions with exceptional, quality care and efficient spending. These permanent 8% bonus payments will protect seniors in low spending regions of the country – including Oregon - from unfair cuts to their benefits and increases to their premiums.

The following is a statement from Rep. Blumenauer:

"We have one shot at getting health care right, and we worked day and night to pass a bill that provides high quality, affordable care to all Americans. I have always supported and worked to advance a public option that will compete with private plans to make them more effective and more affordable. This will help cover millions of Americans, for whom health care reform is a matter of life or death. With 270 Oregonians losing their coverage every day as a result of unemployment, the cost of inaction is simply too great.

"I have worked not only to cover the uninsured, but to protect Oregon's seniors from severe cuts to their affordable, quality Medicare plans. Our Medicare plans are among the nation's most efficient, providing exceptional care at low costs. We truly are a model for other states with runaway costs, and should be rewarded rather than punished. This is why I worked to secure a permanent 8% efficiency bonus for our low-spending counties. I fought tooth and nail

to stop Oregon from being unjustly penalized, and the protections secured for our plans solidified my vote.”

More Background

Many other Blumenauer bills and initiatives were wrapped into the bill that passed through the committee, including:

End of life care consultations (POLST) AND advance planning consultation – SEC. 1233

– This will dramatically improve end-of-life care over time and is based on Blumenauer’s Life Sustaining Treatment Preferences Act and [Advance Planning and Compassionate Care Act](#).

Shared decision making demonstration program – Sec. 1236 – This demo program is modeled closely on Blumenauer’s Empowering Patient Choices Act, which Senator Wyden also introduced. It will test shared decision making in Medicare by providing payments to providers for the investment in patient decision aids and follow up consultations. Patient decision aids are tools such as DVD’s and web-based, interactive programs that provide unbiased, evidence-based information on treatment options and help patients clarify and communicate the personal values they associate with those options.

Efficiency bonus of 5% for doctors in low-spending states – Sec.1123 – This benefit will help many Oregon counties receive a benefit for providing affordable, efficient care.

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